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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

February 13, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

cc: Mr. Roger Morris

FROM: Richard V. Allen *RV*

RE: Nigeria/Biafra

1. The three NSCIG/Africa papers and Roger Morris' Talking Points and Issues for Decision present a wide range of choices on the Biafran situation.

2. Regarding the three papers, it would seem that insufficient attention has been given to the possibilities of orchestrating broad support, particularly in Western Europe, for any proposed course of action by the United States.

3. Little or no attention is given to the role of the United Nations, and the coordination of an active public relations/propaganda campaign in the U.N. and elsewhere on behalf of the course ultimately chosen by the United States. It would seem that the function of harnessing the facilities of USIA would be important.

4. With regard to domestic political impact, no attention has been given to the public statements of the President made during the campaign. As these statements may be recalled when the Presidential decision is made and policy execution begins, it may be useful to review them at this time. Attached is a composite statement, drawn from two releases (17 July and 10 September 1968), and published in Nixon on the Issues. These represent the President's only remarks on the subject during the campaign.

RVA:mm

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DECLASSIFIED  
PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
April 21, 2005

## AFRICA

### Nigerian Civil War

The great humanitarian traditions of the American people dictate that its government speak out against this senseless tragedy — and act to prevent the destruction of a whole people by starvation. President Johnson should leave no diplomatic or economic tool unused in his efforts to break the log-jam — and to help rescue this people from the agony of death by starvation. America's goal is not to intervene in the civil war in Nigeria — not to take sides between armies — it is to take sides against starvation.

Our history cannot allow us to do otherwise.

The terrible tragedy of the people of Biafra has now assumed catastrophic dimensions. Starvation is daily claiming the lives of an estimated 6,000 Ibo tribesmen, most of them children. If adequate food is not delivered to these people in the immediate future, hundreds of thousands of human beings will die of hunger.

Until now efforts to relieve the Biafran people have been thwarted by the desire of the Central Government of Nigeria to pursue total and unconditional victory and by the fear of the Ibo people that surrender means wholesale atrocities and genocide.

But genocide is what is taking place right now — and starvation is the grim reaper.

This is not the time to stand on ceremony or to “go through channels” or to observe the diplomatic niceties. . . . The destruction of an entire people is an immoral objective, even in the most moral of wars. It can never be justified; it can never be condoned.

The time is long past for the wringing of hands about what is going on. While America is not the world's policeman, let us at least act as the world's conscience in this matter of life and death for millions.

The President of the United States is a man charged with responsibilities and concerns all over the world. But I urge President Johnson to give to this crisis all the time and attention and imagination and energy he can muster.

Every friend of humanity should be asked to step forward to call an end to this slaughter of the innocents in West-Central Africa.

America is not without enormous material wealth and power and ability. There is no better cause in which we might invest that power than in sparing the lives of innocent men and women and children who otherwise are doomed.